



The President's Daily Brief

8 September 1973

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Cambodia,

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(Page 1)

The North Vietnamese are building roads in Laos that will enable them to resupply their forces in South Vietnam and Cambodia virtually without regard to the weather. (Page 2)

EC political directors, in preparation for President Nixon's visit to Europe, made some progress this week toward a draft declaration on US-EC relations.

(Page 3)

25X1

Chile

25X1

(Page 4)

25X1

Libya has laid a minefield outside its territorial waters. (Page 5)

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CAMBODIA

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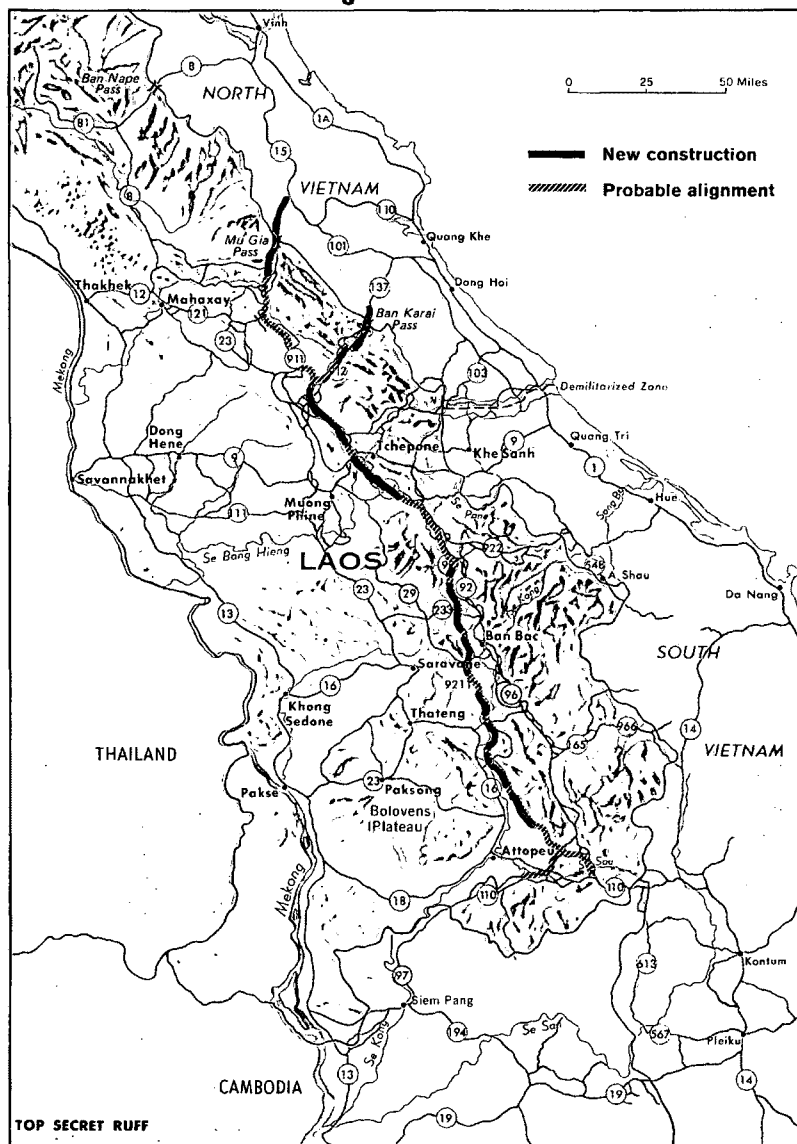
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North Vietnamese Building New Road



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INDOCHINA

[redacted] intercepted messages from engineer units show that construction of a new, high-speed, all-weather road south through the Laotian panhandle is progressing at more than a dozen sites. Since March, about one third of the total mileage between the two entry points in North Vietnam and the probable end-point in Cambodia has been constructed.

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The widespread construction suggests that, far from abandoning the Ho Chi Minh trail, the North Vietnamese may be preparing for another substantial dry-season logistical campaign. Supply shipments would not only augment or replace existing military stores, but would probably contain nonmilitary supplies for Communist-held areas. The road will not be sufficiently complete to carry traffic before the first of the year, however.

Like the new north-south routes along the western border of South Vietnam, the Laos corridor is a two-lane road and well drained for speedy travel and year-long use.

When completed, the two systems will give the Communists increased flexibility and mobility for their widely scattered military forces in Indochina. Links will probably be developed between the two corridors. This means that during the Laotian rainy season the south would be accessible via the route through western South Vietnam; during the winter rainy period in Vietnam the Laotian panhandle corridor would be open.

Once the roads are operational, Hanoi will probably give first priority to improving the lines of communication among the major military strongholds for easier unit rotation and replacement of troops and equipment.

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EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES - US

Representatives of the member states of the European Communities met in Copenhagen this week at the working level. According to the US Embassy in Denmark, they made progress toward an agreed draft declaration on US-EC relations, calling for close links between the two.

The draft will be presented to the EC foreign ministers, who will begin their meeting next Monday. If it is approved, EC Council President Andersen will want to discuss the paper with Secretary Kissinger, possibly at the UN in New York.

There is no certainty, however, that the draft will be approved by the ministers. Danish and West German officials have implied that French Foreign Minister Jobert may not be as "businesslike" as his subordinates. The French have emphasized that their price for going even this far is an understanding that there would be no permanent machinery created between the EC and the US.

Arrangements for President Nixon's visit to Europe apparently went no further than an "exchange of views."

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NOTE

Libya: Libya announced on September 4 that a minefield has been laid in the Mediterranean north-west of Tripoli. It covers approximately 300 square miles and is outside Libya's proclaimed 12-mile territorial limit. Other minefields were laid in June by the Egyptian naval contingent in Libya; these were northeast of Tripoli, but within Libya's territorial claim.

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